



ASSOCIATION ON AMERICAN INDIAN AFFAIRS

Protecting Sovereignty • Preserving Culture

Educating Youth • Building Capacity

SINCE 1922

Press Contact: Eldred D. Lesanse

Eldred.aaia@indian-affairs.org

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART IGNORES RESPONSIBILITIES TO INDIAN TRIBES

WASHINGTON, D.C., October 29, 2018, 4:00 p.m. E.S.T. – The Association on American Indian Affairs, the oldest non-profit serving Indian Country since 1922, demands The Metropolitan Museum of Art remove items of Native American cultural heritage, including sacred items, cultural patrimony and funerary objects, from its exhibit *Art of Native America: The Charles and Valerie Diker Collection* until affiliated Tribal government representatives are consulted.

On Thursday, October 4, 2018, The Metropolitan Museum of Art (The Met) opened its latest Native American exhibit in New York City. According to its website, the installment of “Native art” will feature 116 items from more than 50 cultures across North America that impact Tribal nations from the Great Plains to the Northwest Coast to the Southwest. The majority of these items is from the private collections of Charles and Valerie Diker and includes sacred ceremonial objects, cultural patrimony and burial objects.

There are items in the Met’s exhibition that violate Tribal and customary laws. For Tribal nations, inalienable cultural heritage items are not “art” and are living and breathing entities of their communities essential to the continuation of Native American cultures, traditions and religious practices. Additionally, The Met’s exhibition includes items that may be held in violation of state and federal laws; Native American inalienable items have frequently found their way into collectors’ hands as the result of theft, looting and illegal trafficking.

The Association strongly reaffirms that it is imperative that collectors and museums consult affiliated Tribal government representatives in order to perform their due diligence in determining proper provenance of each cultural heritage item. It is not enough to hire a Tribal individual as a consultant; direct outreach to affiliated Tribal governmental officials is necessary to determine whether an item should be exhibited, and whether any particular item may be a stolen inalienable object.

Please contact The Met at (212) 570-7710, and use #TheMet #MyCultureIsNotYourArt, and demand that they remove immediately all items of Native American cultural heritage from their latest exhibit until they consult with affiliated Tribal governmental representatives.

The Association on American Indian Affairs is the oldest non-profit serving Indian Country and is a 501(c)(3) organization.

DONATE AT WWW.INDIAN-AFFAIRS.ORG

966 Hungerford Drive, Suite 30-A Rockville, MD 20850 (240) 314-7155 General.AAIA@Indian-Affairs.org